

## This Federal Budget 2018 – A note from General Secretary, Stewart Little

We've just seen the latest in a long line of terrible Federal budgets handed down by this Liberal/National Federal government. Our only consolation is that it may be its last.

Members will face two elections within the next 12 months and both are as important as each other for all of us in this state.

With around a third of our state revenue consisting of Federal money, Canberra's actions affect us all directly as NSW public servants. Each dollar not collected as tax from big business, high earners, through mining royalties or lost via tax dodges is a dollar not available to the community to fund our essential services.

Every one of us can look around at work today at the empty desks (or crammed office half the size of the old one, just to save a few bucks on rent), the jobs not being done, or the innovative programs not being funded. We all know how to spend additional money in a way that would benefit the people of NSW through better services and better outcomes for the people of this state.

The same is true for our Federal counterparts in places such as Medicare and DHS, which have suffered the 'Service NSW' treatment. Resources cut, staff cut and offices combined into multipurpose, hard-to-get-to locations, where more space goes to waiting lounges than work areas. Claiming a specialist's payment in one of these DHS centres is a trial of patience worthy of Job.

This budget has also failed to plan for our future with a further cut of \$270 million to TAFE, no reversal of the university funding cuts announced late last year, no increase to address the inadequacies of the NDIS scheme and a second-rate Gonski funding model that won't be able to meet the needs of our children.

Not happy with their savage cuts to Federal Public Services over the past few years, this government has now attempted to bribe the public with tax cuts. After all, an election is looming. These cuts are planned to hand those struggling to make ends meet roughly \$10 a week, but hides that the majority of the money will go to those on more than \$100,000.

But what has gone unsaid by the Liberals and Nationals is why so many are struggling to get ahead at the moment. Let me tell you, it isn't the tax rate that is the problem. After all, the OECD says Australia is the eighth-least taxed developed nation in the world.

The issue is the Industrial Relations systems in this country, state and federal, that have stripped workers of their power to bargain fairly and has imposed massive and systemic real wage losses on workers nationwide.

We know the issue is that wages aren't keeping up with electricity costs, grocery increases, water bills, education costs or private health insurance premiums. From personal experience, I can also tell you that despite the Reserve Bank not moving interest rates for years, my bank still finds a reason to push home loan rates higher!



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Like many of you, yes, I'll benefit with an increase in my take-home pay should these tax cuts come into force after 1 July this year. But I can't say I, or my family, will be any better off.

I think of my two daughters, just starting out in their working lives. How will they benefit from a government that gives with one hand but takes with two?

Mr Morrison talks about removing bracket creep so overtime doesn't push people into higher tax brackets, but this is the same guy doing everything he can to end penalty rates. He has already reduced them for hospitality and retail workers.

The result is my daughter will earn less for her shifts at the pub than she did before this government came along. It's not right, it's not fair, and it needs to change.

The ACTU's Change the Rules campaign is a reminder that fairness needs to be constantly fought for and protected. Last weekend I joined with many of you to celebrate May Day. It's an event that commemorates the successes of workers, here and around the world, in gaining fairness in their working lives over the past century and a half through organised institutions such as ours. It was a timely reminder of why unions are so important to a modern society.

**Stewart Little**  
**General Secretary**

